

AGN. NO. _____

MOTION BY SUPERVISORS KUEHL AND
RIDLEY-THOMAS

March 17, 2015

Several studies have shown that 90 percent of brain development in children occurs before age 5.¹ Early childhood is, therefore, a critical developmental period for children. Many young children involved in the child welfare system do not have access to the early care and education services that help stabilize families and build a solid foundation for a child's future. This lack can lead to an increased risk for an array of poor outcomes, including developmental delays, low academic achievement, substance abuse, teen pregnancy, socio-emotional issues and adult criminal behavior. Fortunately, high quality early learning programs can help reverse or decrease these trends.²

Under current law, priority enrollment in State child care and development services is given to abused or neglected children who are receiving child protective services (CPS), or children at risk of abuse and neglect. It seems clear that all children under Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) supervision should thus, be categorically eligible and prioritized. Unfortunately, however, the vast majority are not

¹ First 5 California: <http://www.ccfc.ca.gov/parents/learning-center.aspx?id=9>.

² Vazquez, Angela (2013). *Early Care and Education Access for Maltreated Children in LA County*. Advancement Project.

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receiving these services due to vague and confusing policies. For instance, Education Code sections have been interpreted to *exclude* children when they are removed from their parents and placed into foster care, including those formally placed with relatives. Paradoxically, children under child welfare jurisdiction oftentimes lose their eligibility and priority for subsidized child care when they are formally placed into foster care despite significant and unmitigated risk factors.³ As a result, in October 2011 only 12.8 percent, or 1,509 children of the DCFS caseload under age five were receiving early education services.⁴

The child welfare and early education systems must work together to ensure the well-being of the most at-risk children by increasing their access to early care and education services. According to the Blue Ribbon Commission on Child Protection, “All children under supervision of DCFS between 0-5 should be prioritized for access to Early Childhood Education learning programs.”⁵ In response to similar confusion around enrollment criteria, the federal Department of Health and Human Services recently issued guidelines to ensure foster children are enrolled in Head Start services. With the Local Control Funding Formula, in 2013, California became the first state in the nation to provide additional resources to school districts to improve the education outcomes of students in foster care. A similar alignment of the State’s priorities across all California Department of Education efforts is key to fully leveraging this historic investment.

From a research and policy perspective, we know that neglect is, by far, the primary reason young children enter the child welfare system.⁶ If a child is removed from the home due to abuse or neglect, children are further traumatized through disrupted

³ Vazquez.

⁴ Vazquez, Angela (2013). *Early Care & Education Rates are Low for Maltreated Children in LA County*. Advancement Project.

⁵ *The Road to Safety for our Children*, Blue Ribbon Commission on Child Protection, April 19, 2014, page 32.

⁶ *First Entries into Foster Care by Reason for Removal, 2011-13*, www.Kidsdata.org, Lucille Packard Foundation for Children’s Health.

relationships and the toxic stress of environmental instability. It is not, therefore, surprising that children in the child welfare system are five times more likely to have developmental delays than children in the general population. According to the Advancement Project, “neuroscience research demonstrates how initial experiences provide scaffolding for later development... Consistent dependable adults help children learn about their environments and how to manage stress before it accumulates and harms the development of young brains.”⁷ High quality early learning can positively change a child’s life course.

From a programmatic perspective, Los Angeles County has a great need to recruit more foster parents, particularly for children under 5. The bed shortage is especially acute for infants, partly because of the significant gap between the cost of fully caring for these children and what the State pays families. As the landscape of foster parents evolves to include more working families, access to child care is crucial to finding a home for these young children. According to focus groups conducted by DCFS, child care is one of the top three barriers to placing children under age 5. Furthermore, support to foster homes is a necessary precursor in the State’s Continuum of Care Reform effort to reduce the use of institutional care settings.

Finally, there is a significant need to provide access to child care for those at-risk children whose young parents are under DCFS supervision (pregnant and parenting teens) and who aging out of foster care, including 282 young children whose parents are currently under DCFS supervision. Young adults with a history of maltreatment are more likely to experience poverty, unemployment and be investigated for abuse or neglect of their own children.⁸ To break the cycle of dependency and ensure self-

⁷ Vazquez.

⁸ Putnam-Hornstein, E, Needell, B, Cederbaum, J, King, B. *California’s Most Vulnerable Parents: When Maltreated Children have Children*, Children’s Data Network, University of Southern California, November 2013.

sufficiency, these parenting foster youth should also be prioritized for State subsidized early education services.

WE, THEREFORE, MOVE that the Board of Supervisors direct the Interim Chief Executive Office to: (1) work with our Sacramento advocates to support or pursue legislation to clarify existing law for State subsidized child development services, and (2) send a 5-signature letter to Governor Brown with copies to the County's Legislative Delegation, in support of such clarifying legislation. State law prioritizes neglected or abused children who are recipients of child protective services, or children who are at risk of being neglected or abused, and as such, clarification is needed to explicitly include foster children and children with parents who are under DCFS supervision.

S:GC/ECE for Foster Children

Early Care & Education Rates are Low for Maltreated Children in Los Angeles County

A conservative estimate of 12.8% (1,509) of the DCFS caseload under age five, 11,778 as of October 2011, attend public early care and education programs, including Head Start/Early Head Start and subsidized child care/preschool.

Children involved in the child welfare system are the most at-risk for developmental delays, poor academic success, and socioemotional issues—all of which early education services can help mitigate or ameliorate, especially for children from low-income families. High quality early learning experiences can positively alter a child's life course, contribute to family stability, and reduce public assistance and intervention costs.

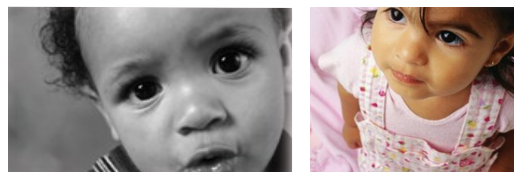
The majority of maltreated young children have experienced neglect—highlighting the too-often immediate and grave consequences of growing up in poverty and under-resourced communities. Furthermore, if a child is removed from the home for any reason, these children have their developmental trajectory further altered by the toxic stress of environmental and caregiver instability layered onto the trauma of maltreatment.

Child welfare and early care and education advocates must work together to ensure the well-being of the most at-risk children by increasing their access to early care and education services.

All children under DCFS supervision should be categorically eligible and prioritized for child care and development services based on current California law as children who are abused/neglected and receiving protective services OR as children who are significantly at-risk of future abuse. They are not receiving these services for a wide variety of implementation barriers due to vague and confusing policies.

Currently, only 2.13% of children receiving state subsidized early care and education services in LA County do so because they are receiving protective services.

This is no higher than the rate of maltreated young children in California or LA County overall and indicative of unsuccessful identification and prioritization policies and practices for state subsidized care. Furthermore, only 131 identified at-risk children in LA County were served outside of DCFS's state-contracted child care voucher program in October 2011 through state-subsidized programs.



High quality early learning programs support three key child welfare goals: safety, permanency, and well-being.

Safety. Observing and responding to early warning signs of child abuse or neglect, or other child-related risk factors for abuse such as developmental delays, socioemotional and behavioral issues, and health issues, in addition to parent or caregiver respite.

Permanency. Provide stable, caring access points for children and parents/caregivers to child and family support services from local community based organizations without the traditional stigma of child welfare.

Child well-being. Promoting the socioemotional development and school readiness of children most at-risk for academic delays and poor psychosocial development, and providing and facilitating stable and responsive relationships with caring adults (teachers, service providers, parents, caregivers etc.).

Disjointed policy hinders collaboration between child welfare and early care and education systems. Still, adopting the following practices will support synchronized efforts, leading to greater child well-being.

Institute education and developmental need assessments in child welfare case planning.

Federal child welfare reporting requirements do not mandate education needs assessments for young children under child welfare supervision before they are school-age. Children may then be receiving early care and education services that do not identify or prioritize maltreated or at-risk children, and neither are child welfare agencies necessarily aware of their enrollment.

Identify families with children most at-risk and ensure access to high quality learning programs.

The high overlap of families receiving CalWORKS and those involved with child welfare (up to 87% of child welfare caseloads) shows that families receiving income-based services are not identified or tracked as families with children at-risk of abuse or neglect. Accurately identifying children most in need of high quality early learning services (i.e. families who are involved with both public assistance and child welfare departments) becomes especially important as available resources continue to shrink for all families.

Target enrollment efforts at the local level to maximize utilization of all available resources.

Federal Head Start/Early Head Start programs use clearer identification and enrollment policies, yet the mix of priority populations for local programs create inconsistent access for children in the child welfare system. For example, 8% of eligible young children in foster care in LA County were enrolled in the 4 largest Head Start programs in 2011—just above the national average of 6% enrollment of children in foster care, but indicating the potential for success in targeted enrollment efforts at the local level.

Increase cross-system collaborative efforts to build comprehensive early learning environments.

Program quality variability and the overall shortage of high-quality early learning spaces in California limit the ability to link at-risk children to high-quality programs that meet the needs of children in the child welfare system with high incidences of developmental delays and socioemotional and behavioral issues. Communication and meaningful partnerships across systems are key for coordinating high-quality services.

Even with these improvements, state and federal policy still needs to be revised to effectively prioritize young children who are perilously at-risk for maltreatment and those already in the child welfare system.

Policy Priority 1

All maltreated and significantly at-risk children under child welfare supervision should be identified and referred by child welfare workers and given enrollment priority in high quality public ECE programs. Policies that achieve this will align with safety and permanency efforts by providing respite and workforce support to parents and caregivers, and will promote child well-being by addressing the significant developmental risks.



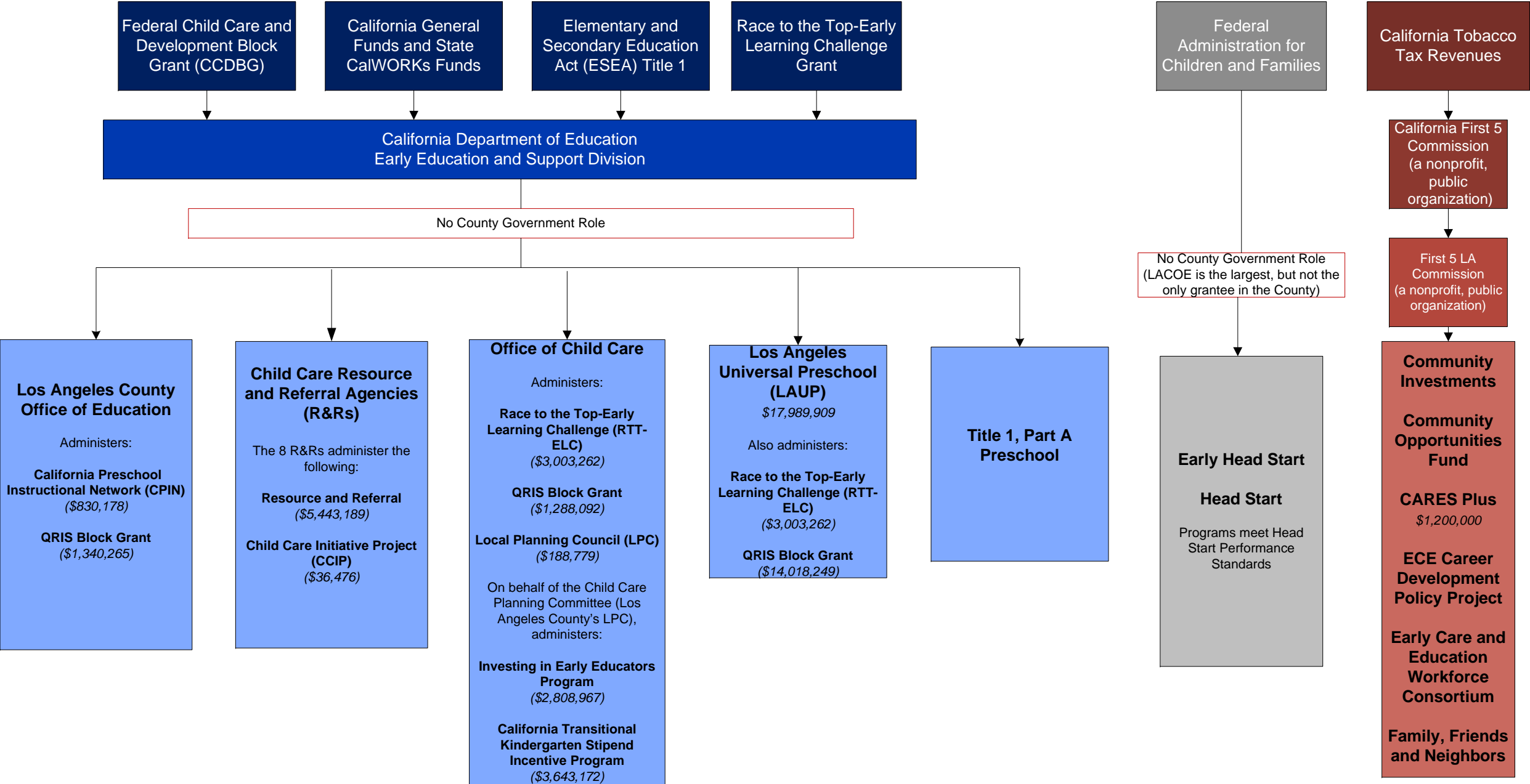
Policy Priority 2

Scale up best-practices (including Head Start/Early Head Start models for collaboration and referral) through policies that remove barriers to collaboration and coordination between early care and education systems and child welfare systems. This will promote consistency of care and ultimately enhance efforts to ensure safe, stable environments for children and align policies for young children with policies for school-age children.

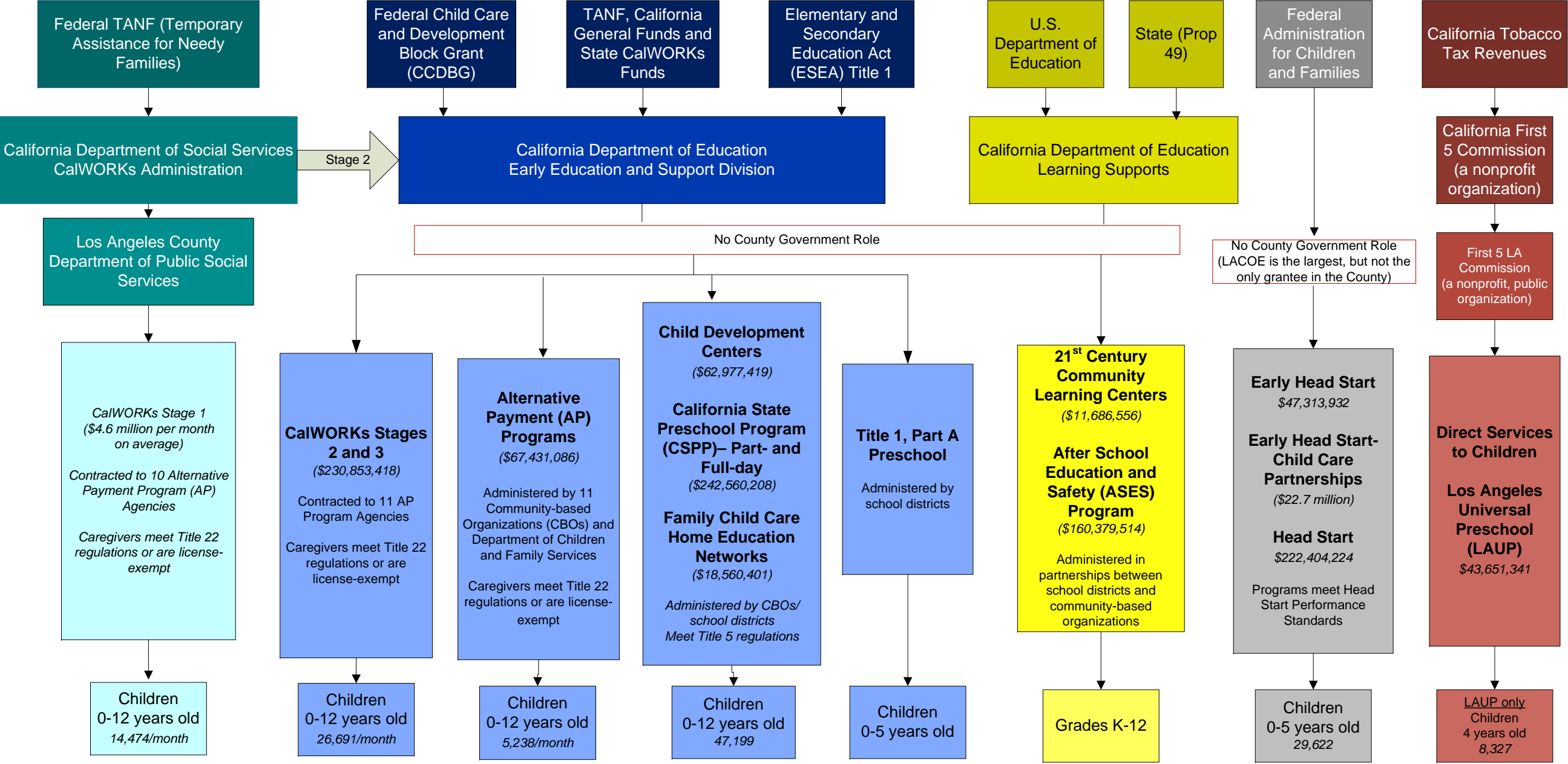
Policy Priority 3

Build high-quality ECE systems, meeting the dual goals of prevention and early intervention, by working in tandem with child welfare, public health, mental health, education, and family support agencies to ensure the safety, permanency, and well-being of all young children at-risk while enrolled in ECE and beyond.

Publicly Funded Child Care and Development Quality Enhancement and Family Support Services for Fiscal Year 2014-15



Attachment 1. Publicly Funded Child Care and Development Services in Los Angeles County for Fiscal Year 2014-15



Publicly Funded Child Care and Development Services and Quality Enhancements in Los Angeles County for Fiscal Year 2014-15

Data Sources and Notes

Direct Services

California Department of Education, Early Education and Support Division (CDE/EESD)

- Funding allocations derived from CDE/EESD CATS Report, special run prepared on behalf of the Local Planning Councils, October 21, 2014.
- *Child Development Centers* - Serve infants and toddlers (birth – 3 year olds) and school age children (five - 12 year olds). In addition, provides wraparound for preschool age children based on family need for full-day services. Most organizations holding a contract for Child Development Centers also hold a contract for the California State Preschool Program in order to serve a combination of age groups such as infants, toddlers and preschoolers or infants, toddlers, preschoolers and school age children. Funding allocation for this program type reflects the proportion of funds seven CDE-contracted organizations assign to their respective Family Child Care Home Education Network (see next note).
- *Family Child Care Home Education Networks (FCCHENs)* – Of the 20 organizations that sponsor FCCHENs, 10 hold direct FCCHEN contracts with the CDE/EESD. The remaining three allocate their entire center-based contract to a FCCHEN, while seven allocate a portion of their center-based contract to the FCCHEN. As such, the allocation listed for the FCCHENs reflects only those organizations holding a direct FCCHEN contract and those using 100 percent of their center-based contract for the FCCHEN.
- Total number of children served with CDE/EESD funding retrieved from the annual survey conducted by the LA ECE Data Collaborative (Los Angeles County Office of Education (LACOE) Head Start-State Preschool, Los Angeles Universal Preschool (LAUP) and the Office of Child Care) in Winter/Spring 2015. Breakdown is as follows:

Ages of Children	Part-day	Full-day	Total
Infants and Toddlers	223	4,379	4,602
Preschoolers	18,601	20,131	38,732
School Age			3,865

CalWORKs Stages 1, 2 and 3 and Alternative Payment (AP) Program

- The data represents a moment in time, provided by the Child Care Alliance of Los Angeles in response to an e-mail request on April 17, 2015. The numbers were accompanied with clarifying notes as follows:
- *CalWORKs Stage 1* – Based on caseload, so it varies, depending on the number of families enrolled and may vary significantly throughout the year. The most recent averages are:
 - Average monthly provider payments (paid directly to child care providers) = \$4.6 million
 - Total children served monthly = 14,474
- *CalWORKs Stage 2 and Stage 3* – also funded based on caseload:
 - Stage 2 = 17,119 children per month (Average Provider Payments = \$7.8 Million)
 - Stage 3 = 9,572 children per month (Average Provider Payments = \$4.4 Million)

- *AP Program* agencies, which is cap funded:
 - Average monthly = 5,238 children at \$2.6 million in provider payments
 - Cumulative total of children on waiting lists across AP Program agencies in Los Angeles County = 43,733 children

Early Head Start and Head Start

- Funding for Los Angeles County was based on calculations provided by the California Head Start Association (CHSA). The cost per child suggested by CHSA is: Head Start = \$8,666; Early Head Start = \$11,954 (June 19, 2015).
- Total number of children served by Early Head Start and Head Start from the annual survey conducted by the LA ECE Data Collaborative in Winter/Spring 2015. Breakdown is as follows:

Program Type	Home-based	Part-day	Full-day	Total
Early Head Start	3,410	72	476	3,958
Head Start	1,560	20,986	3,118*	25,664
Early Head Start-Child Care Partnerships not available				

*Of the 3,118 children receiving full-day services, 2,830 of the children are benefiting from partnering of Head Start with State Preschool.

- *Early Head Start-Child Care Partnerships* – Preliminary Early Head Start-Child Care Partnership and Early Head Start Expansion Awards, announced in December 2014. Retrieved on February 19, 2015 from <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/ecd/early-learning/ehs-cc-partnerships/grant-awardees>.

Los Angeles Universal Preschool (LAUP)

- Funding allocation reported in First 5 LA Meeting of the Board of Commissioners Agenda for June 12, 2014. “Item 2F – Approve LAUP FY 14-15 Contract: Performance Matrix and Budget”. Retrieved on July 2, 2015 from <http://www.first5la.org/files/lpad/6-12-14/Item-2f.pdf>.

Quality Enhancement and Family Support

Comprehensive Approaches to Raising Educational Standards (CARES) Plus – A program of First 5 CA, reflects the three year award amount (July 1, 2013 – June 30, 2016) granted to First 5 LA as the lead agency. LAUP holds a contract with First 5 LA to implement CARES Plus for Los Angeles County as its ASPIRE program

Los Angeles Universal Preschool (LAUP) – First 5 LA Meeting of the Board of Commissioners Agenda for June 12, 2014. “Item 2F – Approve LAUP FY 14-15 Contract: Performance Matrix and Budget”. Retrieved on July 2, 2015 from <http://www.first5la.org/files/lpad/6-12-14/Item-2f.pdf>.

QRIS Block Grant – The Los Angeles County Office of Education (LACOE), as the Local Education Agency (LEA) received the funds and is responsible for administrative oversight, county outreach, and program monitoring and evaluation of the LAC-QRIS Block Grant award. Its portion of funds is \$1,340,265 (\$99,996 indirect, \$758,679 QI and \$481,590 Access/Rating).